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by John Vickers

EMLYN WILLIAMS as Ambrose Ellis

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Edited by Frances Stephens

July, 1945

## Over the Footlights

FOLLOWING the distinguished re-opening of Sadler's Wells Theatre comes news of the triumphs of the Old Vic Theatre Company on the Continent. On July 2nd, they are opening a two weeks' season at the Comédie Française in Paris, with a gala performance of *Richard III*. The other two plays in the repertoire are *Peer Gynt* and *Arms and the Man*.

The Company has finished its six weeks' ENSA tour, having played one week in Antwerp, one in Ghent, three weeks in Hamburg, and one in Paris. At Hamburg they were the first important company to play at the Schauspielhaus; the visit being extended to three weeks at the special request of the military authorities.

After the season at the Comédie Française, the Old Vic Company returns to England to start rehearsals for their second season at the New Theatre, which opens with a new repertoire of plays, in the second week or September.

Meantime, by way of a happy exchange, the Comédie Française opens a two weeks' season at the New Theatre, on July 2nd, with a performance of Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Seville*, preceded by Molière's one-act comedy, *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. This official visit to London (under the auspices of H.E. the French Ambassador and the British Council), of the oldest national theatre in the world is a splendid symbol of the end of nearly six years of artistic "black-out."

On this, its fifth visit to London, the Comédie Française has chosen to bring its classical repertoire—Racine's *Phedre*, Molière's *Tartuffe*, Victor Hugo's *Ruy*

*Blas*, in addition to the plays with which the season begins.

Terence Rattigan's comedy, *Love in Idleness*, was withdrawn on June 23rd, after having run six months, to enable Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne and the entire company to leave on the following day for the Continent, where they are to do a six weeks' Forces tour with the play.

Since this play was produced in London, on December 20th last, all the boxes and seats have been filled for every performance. It was always intended that the run should be a limited one, as the Lunts had to return to America to fulfil a contract, but owing to the great success of the play the original period was extended.

When their Continental tour is over, Mr. and Mrs. Lunt will immediately return to America and will appear in *Love in Idleness* in New York during next season. They hope to revive the play in London when they come back here at the end of next year.

We in London consider ourselves extremely lucky to have had this incomparable pair with us during some very dark days, and their courage in braving the bombs and never wavering will long remain in our grateful memory.

Among forthcoming productions is Norman Ginsbury's play *The First Gentleman*, which opens at the New on July 18th. Henry Sherek is presenting this play for a limited season, with Robert Morley and Wendy Hiller starring as the Prince Regent and his daughter, Princess Charlotte. The Ballets Jooss will open a six weeks' season at the Winter Garden on July 10th. F.S.

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# New Shows of the Month

"The Night and the Music"—Coliseum, May 17th.

"Jacobowsky and the Colonel"—Piccadilly, June 6th.

"Peter Grimes"—Sadler's Wells, June 7th.

## "The Night and the Music"

THIS is a mammoth musical, in which speed and spectacle are the chief ingredients, and one that struck the right kind of extravagant note in Victory-minded London.

Vic Oliver is the star comedian, seen sometimes alone, as in "Roman Holiday" and "Piano Recital" (the latter having an awe-inspiring serious twist), and also in the company of stooge "Slim" Allan and pep girl Betty Paul. At all times he is at the top of his form, and particularly so in this piano rendering (serious) of "Ave Maria" and lightning impersonations of radio personalities.

The show is packed with lavish tableaux—it is a long time since we saw so many lovely girls on the stage at one and the same time. "Birds Eye View, A Masque of London Town," with typical scenes of 1740, 1940, and "The Future," is well suited to the present mood, and "The Great Waltz," which ends the show, a lovely spectacle in white, makes full use of the revolving stage. June Manton is a singer of unusual range of voice, and Jill Manners is another decorative figure in a big company. Robert Nesbitt is to be congratulated on his direction of a complex show and Joan Davis on her dance arrangements. We found the lavish use of microphones a bit overpowering, but the audience loved every amplified note. F.S.

## "Jacobowsky and the Colonel"

THOUGH well aware of the intrinsic weaknesses of this play, we enjoyed much of it and particularly appreciated the unfolding of the character of the little Jew, Jacobowsky, in the entrancing performance of Karel Stepanek. Michael Redgrave's towering Polish Colonel is well conceived and admirably executed down to a most correct accent, and Esme Percy as The Tragic Gentleman has some big moments.

The fall of France in 1940 may seem too tragic a theme for a comedy-cum-spy-thriller, but comedy there always is, even in the most sombre episodes of life. The author (the play is S. N. Behrman's adaptation of the comedy by Franz Werfel), has not overlooked the tragedy of the great exodus from Paris in the face of the advancing Germans, but he has not always been able to co-ordinate his emotions. The

story of the resourceful little Jew whose adaptability is racial and unflinching, and who like some black-coated knight-errant apologetically rescues by dint of sheer cunning a stubborn and mediaeval Pole and his French lady friend from under the noses of the Germans, seems very plausible while they are trundling along the chaotic highway, but later when it comes to miraculous escapes from the waterfront cafe, our faith in Jew and Pole is just a bit shaken.

Rachel Kempson is the lady friend, but we should have liked more of the French abandon, and even a Frenchwoman, we think, would have suffered some wear and tear on the road under such circumstances.

Nothing is missing from Frith Banbury's portrayal of the Gestapo man, and there is real satisfaction in the delightful settings designed by Joseph Carl. F.S.

*Chicken Every Sunday* with Angela Baddeley and Frank Leighton, at the Savoy, *Sweet Yesterday* starring Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth, at the Adelphi, and *Duet for Two Hands*, Mary Hayley Bell's new play at the Lyric, with John Mills and Mary Norris, were produced too late for review in this issue



GRETCHEN FRANKLIN

who has scored such a hit with her "Clippie" number and her versatile character work in *SWEETER AND LOWER*, at the Ambassadors. The revue entered the third year of its record breaking run on June 10th, and is still playing to capacity.

Gretchen Franklin understudied Beatrice Lillie in "Big Top," and played for her with great success on several occasions. Her husband, Caswell Garth, has just had two plays accepted for early production—an adaptation of "The Vicar of Wakefield" and a thriller, "Signpost Leads to Danger."



## Arts Theatre

ON June 26th, too late for review, Paul Bonifas and his Théâtre Molière Company, appeared for a week's run in *L'Avare*, with Paul Bonifas.

The Army's Current Affairs Theatre will play at the Arts for a week commencing July 3rd. All members of the company are in the Army and the A.T.S., and are playing at the Arts under the auspices of C.E.M.A. They are giving two plays; one dealing with the problem of full employment, called *Where do We Go From Here?*, and the other, about "Lease Lend," has the title, *The Great Swap*.

On July 11th, the Arts Theatre Company will present Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

### "Peter Grimes"

THE re-opening of Sadler's Wells Theatre was given particular importance by the production of *Peter Grimes*, the first opera to be composed by the most gifted of the younger generation of English composers, the 31-year-old Benjamin Britten.

*Peter Grimes* is important not only in itself (and it is a fine work by any standards) but in pointing a revival of English musical creation and perhaps the beginning of a national school of opera this country has



Alexander Bender.

#### PETER PEARS

always lacked. Britten's settings to the Michaelangelo Sonnets and to Arthur Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* had already demonstrated his gift for writing vocal music which was at once lyric, dramatic, and achieved an extraordinary intensity in the correlation between instrumentation and voice. In *Peter Grimes*, a grim and sombre tragedy of a Suffolk fishing village freely based on George Crabbe's poem *The Borough*, this gift is developed to a degree of genuine power; the orchestration is not a mere

accompaniment to the singing but an integral part of the whole, just as the *arias* are not "set pieces" of vocal display but merged magnificently into the pattern of the music in the Wagnerian ideal of opera as "music-drama." Nowhere, except in passages of the *Sinfonia de Requiem*, has Britten used the orchestra with such richness and command of poetry and dramatic climax. The sustained melodic line of the strings at the opening of the first scene following the Prologue has an entity of its own which yet merges with the choral singing on the stage, and recalls Verdi's scoring of the "Dio! Mi potevi scagliar" monologue in *Otello* both in its silken texture and contrapuntal balance. The chorus writing is in the best English traditions created by William Byrd and the arid harshness of the action, matched vigorously in the music, is shot with passages of lyric charm or poignancy, notably in the music for the schoolmistress, Ellen Orford, in the quartet for female voices, in Grimes' *aria* in Act II, Scene 2, and in the beautiful scoring of Act II, Scene 1, in which the schoolmistress' gradual realisation of Grimes' cruelty to the boy apprentice at her feet is subtly blended with the singing from the interior of the village church.

As drama *Peter Grimes*, for all its sordidness and darkness of mood and the not entirely successful attempt to turn the child-slaying Grimes into a visionary more sinned against than sinning, is highly theatric; production and design were full of atmosphere, and after Mr. Britten the opera was a triumph for Peter Pears as Grimes. Always a lyrical and musical singer, his voice here shows power as well as beauty and I consider this the most distinguished tenor-singing heard in England since Giovanni Martinelli, most impeccable of artists, sang in *Otello*, *Aida* and *Turandot* at Covent Garden in 1937. All the singing unfortunately did not do justice to the music, but Joan Cross as the devoted schoolmistress sang with musicianship and purity of tone, the choral singing was admirable and Reginald Goodall and the orchestra must be congratulated on their reading of a complex and brilliant score.

A.W.

### The Chanticleer

AN interesting new play was produced at the Chanticleer, on June 30th, with Frederick Valk as Guest Artist. This play, *More Than Science*, by Diana Quirk, concerns the experiments recently carried out by doctors on the Russian front, when patients whose hearts had actually ceased beating, were brought back to life. The play poses the question as to where the control of power like this is to lie, in a world when "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." We know to our cost that uncontrolled science can lead to man's destruction.



## The Embassy

**F**OLLOWING their most successful production of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, in which Walter Hudd and Lydia Sherwood interpreted the sombre parts of Alfred and Rito Allmers with unusual strength and insight, the Walter Hudd Company presented, on June 26th, *The New Morality*, a sparkling comedy by Harold Chapin. The cast includes Walter Hudd, Mercia Swinburne and Wilfrid Babbage. Forthcoming Embassy productions will include Jean Forbes-Robertson and Antony Hawtrej in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and Pirandello's *Henry IV*. Another forthcoming attraction is a sensational new play by Joan Temple. The Embassy has certainly settled down again as an influential playhouse and it is always a pleasure to take a journey to Swiss Cottage.

## Gateway

**I**T is a pleasant experience to visit this little theatre at Notting Hill Gate. There is a new play every week, and the standard of acting is high. Recent productions have included *Comedy Without Manners*, a new play by Lance Hamilton; *To See Ourselves*, a domestic comedy by E. M. Delafeld; and John van Druten's rather sombre play, *Behold We Live*. The Gateway Repertory Players are to be envied for and congratulated upon their adventures in putting on plays by new authors. Equally may the writers be felicitated, for accurate production of a new play in a little theatre is a great benefit to its author, whatever may be the outcome. An interesting new play by Derek Gilpin Earnes, *False Horizon*, is being presented on June 26th, and in July another original presentation is planned, *The Adventurous Rierdon*, by Gerald Brosnan. People who enjoy serious work in the theatre and are attracted to new enterprises, are recommended to visit the "Gateway," which is directed by Irene Edouin. H.M.

## Unity

**C**ALLED by its author a political fantasia, *Alice in Thunderland*, Unity Theatre's latest production certainly has a strong political content which is not entirely out of keeping with the times. Though not always as subtle as it might be, humour is abundant throughout, and reaches a grand climax in the trial scene at the end, in a perfect skit on a double act of the type usually to be found in provincial variety theatres. The two leading members of the cast, Alice, played by Audrey Hale, and Bunny, played by Frank Godwin, are not perhaps the ideal romantic team for a revue, but the rest of the cast give very good support. When it is considered that the company has written its own script, lyrics and music—not an easy task in a revue—praise is undoubtedly due. D.E.E.

## In the News



**ISOBEL  
DEAN**

is a charming Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the Haymarket Theatre, where the season of repertory continues with unabated success.

(Portrait by Alexander Bender).

**RALPH  
MICHAEL**

is now appearing with great success as Victor Prynne, the part formerly played by Raymond Huntley, in the revival of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, at the Apollo.



**ENA  
BURRILL**

contributes a splendid piece of realistic acting as the Fortune Teller in Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of our Teeth*, at the Phoenix.

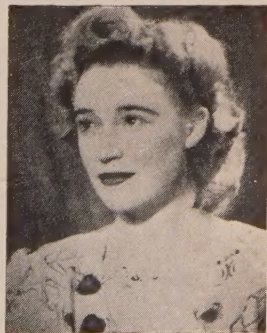
(Portrait by A. Swaebe).



**PAMELA  
CONROY**

who appears as Gladys, the Antrobus daughter, in *The Skin of our Teeth*, in which Vivien Leigh has made an outstanding impression as Sabina.

(Portrait by 20th Century Studios).



## “King Henry the Eighth” at Stratford-upon-Avon



The procession of Cardinal Wolsey in *King Henry the Eighth*, last production of this year's repertoire. *Romeo and Juliet* has also been added since the Festival was reviewed in our last issue. The season continues until the end of September.

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*Ambrose*: Ilestin, the village of the religious mania. A mania to which a Mrs. Parry is tempted to yield, as a desperate remedy for sickness of mind. Those are the facts. I like facts. They keep one sober. *Dilys*: Is that why your pulse is twice the normal speed? Do not forget I am a nurse.

A moment from Act I, Scene 3, shewing DIANA WYNYARD as Dilys Parry, and EMLYN WILLIAMS as Ambrose Ellis.

## “The Wind of Heaven”

AT THE ST. JAMES'S

**H**E would have been a brave man indeed who would have foretold that Mr. Williams's latest play would settle down to a brilliant success in the West End. A religious theme is always a difficult one to get over in the theatre, and the notable exceptions like *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* and *Outward Bound*, only serve to emphasise this fact.

Emlyn Williams has essayed an even more difficult task in his story of the return of the boy Jesus to a mid-Victorian Welsh village, and that he has succeeded in so great a measure, is proof of his brilliance as a playwright and the sincerity with which he has approached his theme.

The critics were divided in their opinions,

which is probably a very good sign, but most paid tribute to the poetry of the dialogue and the clever characterisation; the peasant mother of the boy and the philosopher Pitter particularly standing out as finely-etched creations of a master playwright.

There remains the splendid acting of a fine cast, notably the restrained beauty of Diana Wynyard's Mrs. Parry; the poetic simplicity of Megs Jenkins' Bet, and the cleverly contrasted performances of Emlyn Williams and Arthur Hambling.

The thoughtful playgoer will certainly not miss *The Wind of Heaven*, which marks a milestone in the career of its brilliant author.

PICTURES BY JOHN VICKERS



*Dilys* : Mrs. Pugh's boy—home in Wales?  
*Menna* : From the Crimea. And a Captain, with  
 a wound in the foot.  
*Menna* tells of her meeting with Captain Pugh.  
 (Dorothy Edwards as Menna).

(Below) :

*Dilys* : This house is dead. Can you tell, *Menna* :  
 For a moment you would have sworn it was not  
 dead, but listening.

**T**HE action of the play takes place in the living room of a Manor House, overlooking the village of Blestin in the mountains of Wales. It is the summer of 1856, soon after the end of the Crimean War, and Mrs. Dilys Parry, whose home this is, is a young widow still mourning the death of her husband who died of typhus a year ago, on his way back from the war. But although she has tried to forget her sorrow in the devoted service she gives as nurse in the Blestin Military Hospital, her heart is heavy indeed. Her niece, Menna, lives with her, and the only other members of the household are Bet, Mrs. Parry's faithful servant, a comely young peasant, and Bet's illegitimate son, Gwyn, a boy of thirteen, who helps about the house. Presently we get a glimpse of him—a dreamy-eyed boy who does not speak.

A stranger, by name Pitter, calls unexpectedly on Mrs. Parry, giving the impression that he belongs to the police. He is in search of details of births in the village, which has not had a church for one hundred years, and hopes to obtain some information from the records kept by Mrs. Parry's uncle. Shortly after, Pitter is joined by Ambrose Ellis, a flamboyant, overdressed young man, who is revealed as the owner of a famous circus in Birmingham. Pitter, we now discover, is his manager and an impoverished gentleman of considerable culture, who as a student of human nature finds many interesting details

(Continued facing page)





for his notebook in the astonishing events that are to come. Ambrose Ellis has come in search of a new act for his show, inspired by information given to him by an old tramp, Will Jenkins, who told him about a "magic little man" in Blestin who was able to conjure music out of the air. Mrs. Parry is unable to help them, but it is agreed they should come to dinner that night to meet Evan Howell, a local farmer; a splendid and upright character, who is looked upon as the spokesman in the village. Mrs. Parry, though disliking intensely Ambrose Ellis's ill manners and cynical materialism, is shaken out of her lethargy by the advent of these two strangers.

After dinner that night, Menna announces her official engagement to Captain Iffswyn Pugh, and they drink her health. However, with the tactlessness of youth, Menna tells her aunt that her fiancé's mother has noticed with disapproval that Mrs. Parry does not attend church. Dilys tells the story of the last time she attended church, as a girl of fifteen, but Menna is not satisfied and pursues the subject. When she mentions Mrs. Pugh's opinion that Mrs. Parry should be "resigned to her widowhood," Dilys, who up to now has been unnaturally calm in her grief, gives way to a sudden outburst, crying, "My love, my love, where are you, where are you?", and sheds her first tears.

(Continued on next page)



*Pitter*: What do my eyes say to you, sir?

*Ambrose*: They say, "Stop being the man of the world, turn into yourself."

*Pitter and Ambrose Ellis* arrive in search of the "magic little man." (Arthur Hambling as *Pitter*).

(*Below*): *Dilys*: What is it? *Bet*: I thought I hear something.

(Megs Jenkins as *Bet* and Clifford Huxley as *Gwyn*).





*Evan* : Ah, a little man . . . Na, Na, our little man is not a dwarf.

Ambrose questions Evan Howell.  
(Herbert Lomas as Evan Howell).

When Evan Howell arrives, they question him about the tramp's "little man." Evan has learned his English from the Bible, and in halting words tells the story of Blestin, where no children are born and no singing is heard. We hear about the summer day eleven years before, when all the children of the village, seventy-four of them, and twenty babies, were drowned in a terrible catastrophe. He seems to talk in parables and he says, "The time is nearly come but it is not yet," and he quotes a text, St. John, Chap. V, Verse 24. Just when Ambrose Ellis has begun to feel that it is not a dwarf but a boy he is to look for, Gwyn comes in with the Bible for them to look up the text. A wave of half-realisation sweeps over them as the curtain falls.

Next morning, Pitter comes with the sad news that young Pugh has been taken to hospital with a sudden fever. Dilys, gazing through the window at the boy Gwyn at work in the garden, is joined by Ambrose—a new and sobered Ambrose who, like Dilys, has not slept that night thinking of the strange events of the evening before. "Is something come to us that for two thousand years this tear-stained, blood-sick world has been waiting for?", says Dilys, "Is Jesus come to Blestin village?" Ambrose is stirred to recall memories of his own childhood, spent not far from Blestin. In his life he has denied the promise of the sensitive boy who had seen visions on the mountain top. They bring Bet in and very tenderly draw her story from her. In dire poverty she had been living in some abandoned pig sties with her little boy, when the gift of music had come to him. She describes a day when he came through the field with a lamb in his arms and how the unearthly music filled the air around him. Bet knew in her heart who her son was and so did Evan Howell, but the village had not talked about it, only waited for the day they knew would come. Most astonishing of all for Ambrose Ellis, she tells how Gwyn foretold his coming to Blestin on New Year's Eve, long before Ellis had met the tramp, and that the boy had called him by his correct name, Emrys.

Some hours later, events begin to follow one another swiftly. Menna comes in, beside herself with grief, to say that Iss-

(Continued on page 14)

(Left):

*Dilys* : This is your plague in earnest . . . And Isslwyn?

*Menna* : He died about an hour ago.

Menna brings the dreadful news of the death of Captain Pugh.







*Evan* : The day is come, Mrs. Parry, and the voices are quickened in song.

The hospital is stricken with plague, but Evan Howell announces that the great day has come.



*Dilys* : Why are you in your best?

*Bet* : With that singing I think it is the least his mother can do. I had got it ready, for deep inside of my heart, I feel this coming a long time now.

Bet knows the time has come for her son to do his great work of healing the sick.



The boy goes out to the crowd and to the hospital, where Isslwyn is raised from the dead and the soldiers are cured of the plague.



*Mrs. Lake:* Then — who is this woman he talks about?

*Dilys:* He does not talk about any woman, he says—does he not—that the course of his life is changed?

(Barbara Couper as Mrs. Lake).

lwyn has died of cholera, the dreaded plague. A choir is heard singing in the street and Evan Howell comes in to say the day is come. Dilys calls Bet, who, arrayed in her best clothes, tells with great dignity all that has happened that day. Gwyn had come back from market after hearing of the plague, saying, "I am a servant, as well, the servant of my Father," and that the sick were waiting for him. The boy comes in; his mother scrutinises his hands; there is singing outside and he goes out to the crowd.

It is two days later and much has happened. Isslwyn has been brought back from the dead, and the other plague stricken soldiers are cured. Dilys comes in tired

from the hospital and we hear that Ambrose has been working with the boy like a man possessed. The story of the miracle has spread and crowds of sightseers have been pouring into the village.

It is now that the worldly Mrs. Lake comes to Dilys' house looking for Ambrose, suspecting that an intrigue with a woman is keeping him from Birmingham. It is Mrs. Lake who has helped Ambrose to his present flourishing position with a promise to marry him, and Dilys quickly sees that Mrs. Lake would never understand the new influence that has come into Ambrose's life. When Ambrose returns carrying the boy Gwyn, who is worn out

(Continued on page facing)





Ambrose: We shall find ourselves on street corners in the rain, gaped at, taunted like gipsies.

Dilys: One day we shall look back, and all that will be nothing.

The boy has died of the plague, but Ambrose and Dilys pledge themselves to spread the faith.

(Right):

Ambrose: Evan, how does the Lord's Prayer begin in Welsh?

Evan: The Lord will help you, sir. Speak with Him homely, for He knoweth you well.



from his labours in the hospital, he does not see Mrs. Lake, and she watches with amazement when he talks to Bet about the happenings of the day. Later they meet, and then begins the big struggle for Ambrose's soul; Mrs. Lake triumphs with the offer of glittering new commercial triumphs for Ambrose, and he agrees to go back with her. Somewhere outside a cock crows three times.

In the last scene, Evan and Menna are waiting anxiously for the doctor, for the boy has fallen ill with cholera. Dilys is nursing him, but the doctor does not come, and Dilys' faith is slipping now that Ambrose has deserted them. Ambrose returns. He has won his spiritual battle and has

come back, tired and travel-stained, having found another doctor on the way. He is full of plans. Dilys and he will go out teaching and will brave the scorn of the people. They see the doctor approaching but just before he arrives "a wind of music" sweeps through the house, but no curtains are stirred. Bet comes in to say that the boy has died. The crowd are waiting for Ambrose; he goes out to them reciting the Lord's Prayer in Welsh, and Dilys is left with Pitter, the philosopher, who cannot bring himself to full belief.

As the voices outside turn to gladness, Bet comes in with warm water and goes upstairs to minister to the body of her child.



The secret marriage of the Duchess and her Steward, at the Duchess's Palace in Malfi.

(L. to R.: Leslie Banks as Antonio Bologna, Peggy Ashcroft as the Duchess of Malfi, and Joy Harvey as Cariola, her woman).



*Duchess*: This green fruit The scheming Bosola sets a t  
Duche  
Left: Cecil Trouncer as Daniel Bosola, Cariola's man (the Duke's

# *"The Duchess of Malfi"* AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE

● This ma  
C.E.M.A.  
London's  
the trag  
is staged  
Dawson



*Duchess*: I pray thee, when were we so merry:  
A happy scene in the Duchess's bedchamber three years after her marriage.



The Duke's outraged love for his beautiful sister reaches the point of frenzy, and she and her husband and children are banished from Malfi.





such are not friends.  
his suspicion that the  
Gentleman of the horse to



The brothers of the Duchess receive news of her marriage. The Duke's desire for revenge becomes a jealous obsession near to madness.

(Left: Leon Quartermaine as the Cardinal, and John Gielgud as Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria).

#### PICTURES BY CECIL BEATON

tion of John Webster's tragedy, presented by Tennent Plays, Ltd., in association with  
est addition to the repertory season at the Haymarket, has made a deep impression on  
s. The play is directed by George Rylands, who has contrived to bring out to the full  
Shakespeare's contemporary. Apart from the brilliant acting of the company, the play  
h of exquisite Renaissance detail, and the decor of Roger Furze and costumes by Beatrice  
nest praise.



hess, pursued by the vengeance of her broth-  
s herself in exile in the country near Ancona,  
Duke has more forms of refined torture in  
store for his sister.



Antonio: Do not weep. Heaven fashioned us out of  
nothing, and we strive to bring ourselves to nothing.



A grim moment from Act IV, the Duchess back in her palace which is now her prison, is confronted with a dead hand.



*Bosola*: I am come to make thy tomb.  
The Duchess, who has bravely faced the torments  
visited by her brother, goes to her death with  
dignity.



A scene in the Cardinal's Palace in Milan, in Act V. *Bosola* and the wanton *Julia*, wife of *Castruchio* and mistress of the Cardinal.  
(*Marian Spencer* as *Julia*).



*Bosola*: I think I shall shortly grow the common  
for churchyards.  
A moment towards the end of the play, when vic  
death is the brothers' just reward for their villa

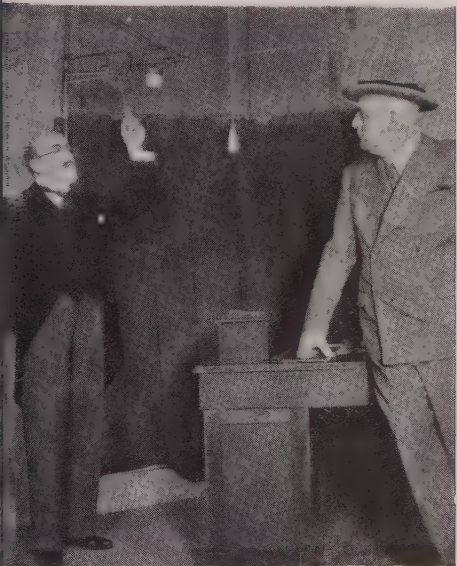




*Mould*: Twenty-five years I've put into this place—the best years of my life—and now to say goodbye to all the old associations.

*Madame Louise* tells her faithful staff that she has been forced to part with her old established business in payment of a betting debt.

(*L. to R.*): Constance Lorne as *Madame Louise*, Robertson Hare as *Mr. Mould*, and Lesley Brook as *Penny*.



*Mould*: We happen to be one of the few remaining London Houses retaining a cash change expediter.

*Trout*, the new owner of the business, is impressed when he meets *Mr. Mould*.

(*Alfred Drayton* as *Mr. Trout*).

## “*Madame Louise*”

AT THE GARRICK

SCENES from Vernon Sylvaïne's latest farce, which has proved the ideal medium for that brilliant comedy pair, Alfred Drayton and Robertson Hare, who have never been seen to better advantage. The play, directed by Richard Bird, is a big success which is sure to fill the Garrick Theatre with laughter for a very long time to come. The scene is designed by Clifford Pember. Linnit and Dunfee, Ltd., present the play.

PICTURES BY  
*JOHN VICKERS*



*Mr. Boot, Junior* : I think it's a little too small for me.

*Mr Trout* : It's not too small for you—you're too big for it!

The extremely amusing scene when Mr. Trout tries to sell an unfortunate chance caller Mr. Mould's cardigan and a broken down kettle.  
(Robin Hood as Mr. Boot, Junior).

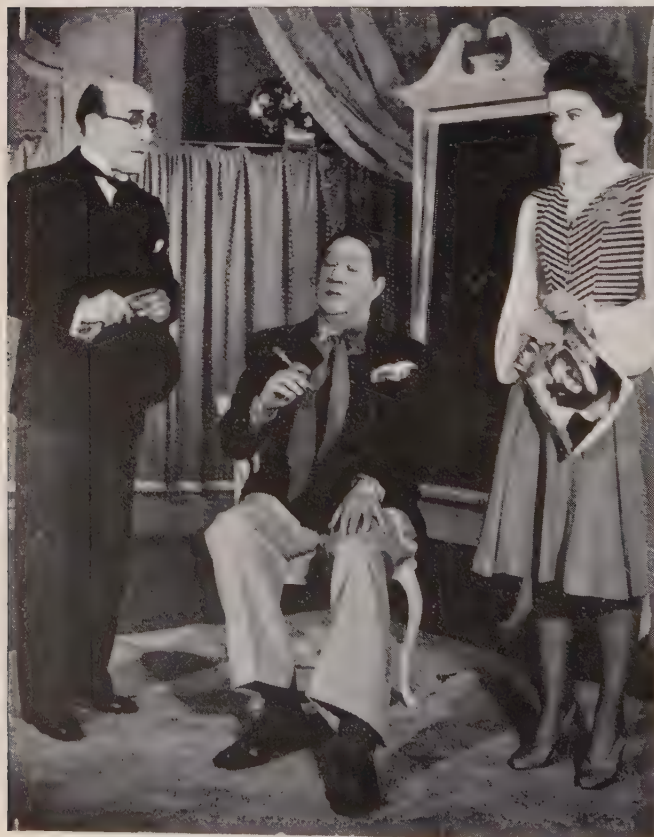


*Mr. Trout* : If you let the be know where I'm hiding o you'll kill me. See?

*Slim* : All right, Charlie, Chu I won't say nothing. Honest won't.

Mr. Trout, who hopes becoming the new 'Madam Louise,' to keep out of the way of a rival racing gang impresses on Slim, one of his own men, that his whereabouts must be kept secret.

(Al Millen as Slim).



*Mr. Trout* : You understand that your duties will include button matching and running out cigarettes?

Two weeks later Mr. Mould, who would really rather starve than work for a man like Mr. Trout, is persuaded by Penny, whom he greatly admires and for whom he feels responsible, to return to the shop. The business has been entirely modernised (including Penny), and Mr. Trout, now 'Madam Louise,' is hardly recognizable in a brilliant red w.





*Pearl*: Would you like to give me a "Night in Paris," Mr. Mould? Or can't you run to it?  
*Mr. Trout*: I bet he would if he had the chance!  
 The highly respectable Mr. Mould is over-powered by Mr. Trout's glamorous friend.  
 (Harriette Johns as Pearl).



Mr. Trout has installed some attractive mannequins, but for all that business is slow.

*Centre*: Maria Barry as Eve, and *Right*, Diana Wilding as Dawn.



*Slim*: There's something very nasty coming along the street, Charlie.

*Mr. Trout*: Who is it, Felling?

*Slim*: No sir, your old woman!

Slim gives Mr. Trout some bad news.



*Eve*: This is the second time I've played strip-tease for him!

The unlucky moment when Mr. Trout demonstrates the ill-fated 'Charlie Trout Economy Creation.'



*Mrs. Trout* : I've never met such a gay deceiver.

Mr. Mould finds himself involved in some embarrassing situations, but he carries on for Penny's sake and in the hope of demonstrating his own invention of a three-in-one gown.

(Ruth Maitland as Mrs. Trout.).



*Felling* : If you've been putting anything across me, I'll wipe you out—cold!

Mr. Trout's enemy arrives, much to Mr. Mould's discomfiture.

(L. to R.: Jack Howard as Curly, Paul Demel as Fleming).



*Mr. Boot, Senior* : Look at the damned kettle, Madame! That's no sort of present for a sick woman. Mr. Trout and Mr. Mould, heavily disguised in their efforts to elude Felling, are confronted by the irate father of Mr. Boot, Junior.

(Left: W. V. Burn, who originally created the part of Mr. Boot, Senior. The name W. V. Burn hides the identity of Vernon Sylvaine, the author of *Madame Louise*).





*Felling* : Who's this?

*Mr. Trout* : It's my little girl. Rosebud, meet  
Mr. Felling.

*Felling* does not recognise Mr. Mould in his  
latest disguise.



*Pearl* : Goodbye, Mr. Mould, darling.

Pearl takes her departure with Felling, who  
is as a result, quite prepared to overlook  
his old score against Mr. Trout.



The closing moments of the play, Madame Louise returns to announce that, as she has  
known all along, the shop is to be taken over by the authorities and demolished for  
street widening. Thus Mr. Trout, in his moment of triumph, finds that he has been sold  
a pup, while Madame Louise and Mr. Mould quit the premises in high good humour.



Beryl Grey and Alexis Rassiné in Act I and right, Alexis Rassiné in Act II of *Giselle*.  
(Pictures by Edward Mandinian).

## The Ballet

SADLER'S WELLS and BALLET RAMBERT REVIEWED  
by Audrey Williamson

THE Sadler's Wells Ballet season which ended at the New Theatre on June 23rd contained only one revival: Ashton's *Les Rendezvous*, his earliest work for Sadler's Wells which has not been seen for some time. A trifle, light as air, and of a texture as transparent and shimmering as a soap-bubble, it is a *divertissement* ballet *par excellence*, a delight to eye and ear if not to mind and with a fluidity and charm in the use of group, pattern and "line" that Ashton has rarely surpassed in his later works. Auber's effervescent music and William Chappell's snowy beribboned costumes are the perfect embellishment of this choreography, which for all its lightheartedness makes considerable demands on the dancers in style and technique. These the company only partially meet, but Margaret Dale, Joan Sheldon and Gordon Hamilton of the *pas de trois* dancers have excellent precision and on the afternoon of June 2nd Beryl Grey danced the Markova role with an accelerating speed, elevation and assurance such as I have not personally seen in this ballet for several years. Alexis Rassiné danced the male role with agile grace and cleanness of classical "line" and both principals charmingly caught the ballet's spirit of freshness and spontaneity.

In this season's performances of *The Quest* Ashton's controlling hand has been still more apparent: new and imaginative lighting has added immeasurably to the visual effect of the Palace of Pride, and both choreography and performance seem more highly polished than for some seasons past,

although Robert Helpmann's now permanent absence from the part of St. George has emphasised the weakness of Ashton's conception and how much the character depended on the expression and sense of spirituality of the artist, as well as his ability to give a danceable quality to a largely static role. In *The Faerie Queene* Spenser's grave and lyrical knight errant represents the ideal of chivalry and the spirit matched against brute force; this balance between St. George and the Saracens is now lost both physically and in spiritual emphasis. Margot Fonteyn's sensitive and graceful Una and Beryl Grey's brilliantly-danced and seductive Duessa remain outstanding performances in a ballet which contains much exciting dance-invention and a highly dramatic score.

Of new performances Gordon Hamilton's Dr. Coppelius has proved a quiet, quaint and original piece of character work from an artist who is becoming increasingly valuable to the company as a mime of exceptional intelligence and finely-etched detail. *The Rake's Progress*, *The Prospect Before Us*, *Hamlet* and *Miracle in the Gorbals*, all fine examples of ballet with a character emphasis, tragic, satiric or comic, have notably revealed this company's dramatic bent, although an alteration in the ending of the last-named ballet, with the two women hurrying in fear from the scene of the murder, pulls against the *andante* of the closing chords of the music and is psychologically less convincing than the original ending, when their slow departure and lingering

(Continued on page 26)



# Commonsense Shakespeare

by  
ERIC JOHNS

**T**HREE and a half centuries have rolled on since young William Shakespeare responded to the hearty toasts drunk at his wedding breakfast in a picturesque Sheep Street house at Stratford-on-Avon. If Shakespeare's Ghost haunts that same room any evening this Summer about eleven o'clock he will discover a glamorous American actress enjoying a quiet supper after playing one of the immortal heroines at the Memorial Theatre. This decorative figure with blonde tresses cascading over her slender shoulders is none other than Claire Luce, this Season's leading lady of the most famous annual festival in the international theatre.

Shakespeare's Ghost cannot have lain dormant all these years. I feel quite sure he knows who's who and what's what in the Theatre, and must be highly delighted to welcome to Stratford so vital and intelligent an artist as Claire Luce, since they appear to have a good deal in common. Shakespeare was always aware of trends in popular taste and gave the public what they wanted; he could not hope to find a more versatile actress than Claire Luce in London, Paris, or New York, for her career suggests she has an astounding flair for divining what the public wants and giving it to them with lavish generosity.

Despite the undeniable fact that she is in the younger generation of our theatrical celebrities, Claire Luce has rivalled Mistinguett as one of the bright attractions of Paris revues; she has been the toast of New York as a Ziegfeld star; and here in London we first went wild over 'Night and Day' when she sang it as a duet with Fred Astaire in *Gay Divorce*, and since that time the Town has acclaimed her as a brilliant comedienne, partnering the inimitable Seymour Hicks in *Vintage Wine*. In *Follow the Sun* she was a revue star in the glorious Cochran tradition, and when war broke out she was giving an intensely dramatic performance as 'Curley's Wife' in Steinbeck's powerful drama, *Of Mice and Men*.

All this goes to prove that Claire Luce is an actress with a brain as well as a face. Whether the public want witty revue, musical comedy, French farce, or harrowing melodrama she is there to supply the demand in each and every kind of vehicle and to supply it in the form of a first rate performance. Whether she is being murdered by Niall MacGinnis in the Steinbeck play or singing a sophisticated ditty in the Cochran revue



CLAIRE LUCE

she is still as good as any actress could be in the part. There is no question of having to make allowances because she happens to take more than one type of entertainment in her stride.

With the outbreak of war came the Shakespeare boom, and Claire turned her attention to the Bard. In a London park she realised a life-long ambition by playing 'Katherine' in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and following that triumph came the coveted invitation to star at Stratford, playing 'Cleopatra' in this year's Birthday Play, and making theatrical history by being the first American actress to play leading roles for an entire season at the Memorial Theatre. Ada Rehan went to Stratford and Mary Anderson played 'Rosalind' at the old theatre, but these events were in the nature of isolated guests appearances, as neither actress stayed a whole season. It remained for Claire Luce in this Lend-Lease Age to devote six months of the year to playing on the banks of the Avon.

The Claire Luce season at Stratford will go down in history as one of the most refreshing theatrical experiences since Stratford became the Mecca for all really serious Shakespearean playgoers. There is a good deal to be said for tradition, but on the other hand, when an actress plays a part in the hide-bound traditional manner she is in danger of producing little more than a carbon copy of previous interpretations, and in

(Continued overleaf)

consequence the public sees nothing that can really be called new.

Claire Luce has not been influenced by tradition. She has spent most of her life perfecting entertainment outside the Classical Field, and is unaware how great actresses of the past interpreted the roles she is now playing at Stratford.

Being totally uninfluenced by Ellen Terry's or any other 'Beatrice' she tackled the part on the opening night of the Festival as if *Much Ado About Nothing* might have been written by a new author only the previous week. In consequence, half the charm of her work lies in this fresh attack and in the fearless manner in which she applies pure commonsense to the Classics. Too many actresses playing Shakespeare for the first time are afraid to be honest about their personal reaction to the role; they hesitate even to think along the original lines, being far too concerned about how their predecessors played it.

'Cleopatra' is really too much for any one actress. Too much is expected of her before the curtain rises. No woman, however dazzling a beauty and however superb an actress, can hope to live up to the popular conception of the Queen of the Nile, who has been lauded by poets and historians for centuries, in addition to having inspired Shakespeare to write the most complex of all his female characters.

During the past fifty years many famous actresses have played the role—Mrs. Langtry, Janet Achurch, Constance Collier, Edith Evans, Dorothy Green, Mary Newcomb, Eugenie Leontovitch, and Tallulah Bankhead. Each one of these celebrated players has had her moments, but had Claire Luce studied all their press criticisms and devoted months to the reading of various biographies and odes inspired by the Egyptian enchantress, she would probably have been utterly defeated by an inferiority complex and refused to play the part. Instead, she concentrated on the Shakespearean text, word by word, and used her intelligent head to give a performance which appeals both to the scholar and the man in the street, and which will go down in history as a very fine conception of Shakespearean interpretation.

Similarly the Luce 'Viola' is something unique. Most actresses play her either as a swashbuckler or as a sort of Classical principal boy. Claire did not see her as a swashbuckler, and being an American, the principal boy is a convention outside her theatrical experience, so she plays 'Viola' as a rather shy young woman, slightly embarrassed by her male attire, and it is altogether an enchanting conception.

Undoubtedly once again Claire has found what the public wants. The Memorial Theatre is packed night after night, whether

she plays 'Cleopatra,' 'Viola,' 'Beatrice' or 'Mistress Ford.' Apart from regular visitors to the Festival, busloads of Servicemen pour into Stratford bringing playgoers from all over the Empire, from America, France, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and other parts of the world where culture still stands for something in life.

After a recent performance nearly a hundred American soldiers, men from all walks of life, representing practically every one of the United States, lined up at the stage door and asked to shake hands with the distinguished compatriot who had made Shakespeare mean something more for them than a series of fine sounding speeches. By fearlessly ignoring tradition, and bringing a keen intellect, brilliant technique, and sound commonsense to these Classical roles, Claire Luce has made them live as women of flesh and blood who can be appreciated and loved by all who meet them under her guidance—even those who have been denied the advantage of an education that included the schoolroom study of one of the more familiar Shakespearean texts.

### **The Ballet** (Continued from page 24)

backward glance at the body on the ground had a moving sense of devotion and stunned bereavement; something of that terrible manifestation of grief, experienced in air raids, that caused the bereaved to cling to the scene of disaster, unable to tear themselves away even after all hope was removed.

#### **Ballet Rambert.**

The Ballet Rambert made one of its rare appearances in London for one week at Hammersmith on 4th June, when two new ballets, Walter Gore's *Simple Symphony* and Andr e Howard's *The Fugitive*, were performed for the first time in London.

*Simple Symphony*, a dance suite composed to Benjamin Britten's music, echoes the simplicity of the title and the light rhythmic charm of the music in an arrangement of dances notable for their good humour, consistency of style and continuity of progression. There is a nautical flavour both in the dances and in Ronald Wilson's *d cor* and costumes, which were beautifully lit and in which the blending of deep blue, crimson and rust showed that this 18-year-old artist has already a mature grasp of colour design as well as of stage atmosphere. The "sentimental saraband," in which these joyous and impudent fisherfolk take on a *Dark Elegies* gravity, more Tudor than Talgalor, is the least original movement. The rest has the salty freshness of a sea breeze and a variety in rustic dance movement that is perhaps the best thing of its kind in English ballet since certain of the dances in Ashton's *Capriol Suite*.

(Continued on page 29)



# Echoes from Broadway

BY OUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT E. MAWBY GREEN

FROM Ferenc Molnar's internationally famous play *Liliom*, Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd have fashioned for the Theatre Guild the master musical of the year—*Carousel*. In putting *Liliom* to words and music the Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein have transplanted the European background to New England. This is in keeping with their campaign to sing out about America and follows in the phenomenal footsteps of *Oklahoma*!

With *Carousel*, the American musical stage has taken another long step forward, striking a new form that is neither opera nor operetta but akin to both. The haunting pathos of *Liliom* has not only been preserved but heightened by a magical score that captures every mood. There is the jaunty, bustling tempo of "June is Busting' Out All Over," the lovely ballad "If I Loved You," the hymn-like "You'll Never Walk Alone," the bitter sweet "What's the Use of Wond'rin'," the mellow Festivity of "This was a Real Nice Clam Bake" and Billy Bigelow's (nee *Liliom*) magnificent soliloquy inspired by the knowledge he is to become a father. Also interwoven is beautiful ballet music, and striking connecting themes make a perfect musical frame.

As in *Oklahoma*!, the Theatre Guild has assembled a cast of comparative newcomers all of whom are youthfully exuberant and talented and are destined to go on to stardom as have the original *Oklahoma*! leads. John Raitt is a vocally superb New England *Liliom* and Jan Clayton is a wistfully enchanting Julie. As Carrie, Julie's friend, Jean Darling, who was the little girl with the golden curls in the *Our Gang* comedies of years ago, is now a full blown nineteen but still the same old scene stealer.

Agnes de Mille, who first struck oil with her formula for bringing the ballet down to earth in *Oklahoma*! and further perfected it in *One Touch of Venus* and *Bloomer Girl*, has surpassed these former triumphs with her ballet in which Billy Bigelow looks down from Heaven and sees his adolescent daughter, who has inherited his unconventional traits, made unhappy by the conventional people around her. This is brilliantly danced by teen-aged Bambi Linn.

Directing *Carousel* must have been a cumbersome and difficult task but Rouben Mamoulian overcame all the problems with almost complete success. He has staged this wonderful production with a keenly sensitive eye and an unmistakable rhythm



John Raitt and Jan Clayton in *Carousel*, the new Theatre Guild triumph.

that is leisurely in keeping with the story, without allowing the action to lag. No less inspired are the plaintive and picturesque settings of Jo Mielziner and the period costumes of Miles White.

With *Carousel* now playing directly across the street from their musical mint *Oklahoma*!, the Theatre Guild is grossing about \$75,000 a week on 44th street. So far we have heard of no Guild plans to bolster the funds of the Bank of England but we hope with V-E Day now comfortably around the corner, these two hits will soon be spreading their charm and freshness around Piccadilly Circus.

Another smash musical, this time along more conventional lines, is Mike Todd's *Up In Central Park*, which has a book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields, music by Sigmund Romberg and lyrics by Miss Fields. This one has been standing them up steadily since it made its first big bow at the box-office in January.

For its story the authors have dug into New York City's graft ridden days of 1870.

Specifically of Boss Tweed (Noah Berry), the political big shot of that day and how he clipped for himself a fabulous fortune from the taxpayers when he converted a plain plot of land into what is now Central Park, the City's big back yard. Romance creeps into the tale through the daughter of a poor Tweed follower (Maureen Cannon) and the newspaper reporter (Wilbur Evans), who is sworn to expose the Tweed Ring. The romantic ups and downs that ensue provided Sigmund Romberg with the opportunity to write some of his most popular songs in recent years meaning: "Close as Pages in a Book," "It Doesn't Cost You Anything to Dream," "April Snow" and "When She Walks in the Room."

As is Mr. Todd's custom, he has dressed up the production in a most fetching and fascinating manner. Scenic Designer, Howard Bay, has gone to the famous Currier and Ives prints for his inspiration and has struck a beautiful nostalgic note. This has been further enhanced by the eye-filling costumes of Grace Houston and Ernest Schrapers.

The Cinderella story of the season belongs to eighteen-year-old Maureen Cannon, who brought to life one of those Hollywood back stage scenarios. When the show was practising out in Philadelphia, Mr. Todd decided his leading lady was not right for the part so a few days before the New York opening he substituted the practically unknown Miss Cannon. With her youthful verve and pert, Irish tricks, she captured the critics and Mr. Todd, taking no chances, has tied her up for seven years, which is probably only a year or two short of the run *Up in Central Park* will have in America.

*Dark of the Moon*, a legend with music by Howard Richardson and William Berney, which the Messrs. Shubert have presented, is one of the season's more interesting and unusual offerings and is enjoying a successful engagement.

This verse drama recounts the weird tale of a witch-boy, who has a Conjur Man make him human so he can marry the promiscuous belle of the Smoky Mountains, Barbara Allen, with whom he had consorted. He is granted his wish on the condition that the lusty Barbara remain faithful to him for a year. After she has given birth to a lifeless

black monstrosity, the neighbours' suspicions that she has married a witch are confirmed. One of those "getcha hot" revival meetings are held to save Barbara. Reluctantly she breaks down and confesses her sin and carried away by the mood of the meeting commits her act of adultery, thereby causing her husband's return to the witch world.

*Dark of the Moon* has difficulty in filling out an entire evening and is spread too thin in spots but it builds to a scene of great dramatic intensity in the final leave taking of Barbara and the witch-boy.

A competent cast headed by Carol Stone and Richard Hart perform with commendable sincerity under Robert E. Perry's Direction. George Jenkins' settings fill the stage and theatre with their primitive and eerie moodiness. There are folk songs and dances interspersed but only during intermission did we hear "I Can't Give You Anything but a Witch Baby."

The Pulitzer Prize for the best play of the season has gone to *Harvey*, by Mary Chase. In talking with producer Brock Pemberton and *Harvey's* director, Antionette Perry, we inquired what was being done about a West End production. Mr. Pemberton said he had received several offers but he was reluctant to rush into anything until he was convinced the set-up was right. He voiced our own fears that *Harvey* might be given the London farcial treatment. He seemed inclined towards waiting until he and Miss Perry could get over to make sure *Harvey's* prize-winning qualities were kept intact. This occurred to us as a very sensible attitude for *Harvey's* humour is not simple and could easily be distorted into a resounding flop by misinterpretation. Furthermore, there is nothing about the adroit New York production that could not be equally understood and appreciated by London theatre-goers.

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# Whispers from the Wings



by  
LOOKER ON

Left: A charming study of Hermione Baddeley, who has scored another big success in revue at the Saville.

AFTER enjoying a performance of Leslie Henson's *Gaieties* at the Saville Theatre I went back-stage to pay my respects to a familiar pair of shoes, which should eventually find their way to the Theatre Section of the London Museum, for they are almost as famous as Charlie Chaplin's cane and George Robey's bowler hat.

They are a down-at-heel pair of snakeskin strap shoes which Hermione Baddeley has worn for years in one show after another as part of her low-life character studies. They were a legacy from an Irish housemaid, and on many an occasion they have enabled her to give that masterly touch of perfection to one of her superb Cockney characterisations.

I like those shoes. They are old friends. Whenever I see Hermione wearing them I know that she is at her best. She is always at her best as one of the shabbier specimens of humanity born within the sound of Bow bells. She loves the Cockney dearly, and whether she is moving us to laughter or tears we always warm towards the character she creates for our entertainment. In *Sky High* those shoes lent a pathetic touch to the old lady about to have her cherished pet destroyed; but in the *Gaieties* the shoes take on a brighter mood. They belong to the wife who misses the last Tooting bus, after taking her husband (played delightfully by Leslie Henson) and gramophone out for a musical evening that proved something of a fiasco, due to their having left the needles at home.

Hermione Baddeley is in the Royal Line of Clowns. Sitting there on that seat, waiting for the bus that never comes, she convulses the house with her adenoidal back-chat; but there are also moments when she brings us to the verge of tears, recalling similar bygone nights when romance was in the air and she met her mate. Her shoes indicate that these mates have hardly managed to build the castles they must have visualised in the moonlight of those far-off

"courting nights," but they are good solid shoes and they tell us that this Cockney couple have been clever enough to make both ends meet in spite of having to rough it for years.

We have occasionally had the opportunity of admiring Hermione in straight plays, such as *Tobias and the Angel*, *The Greeks had a Word for It* and *Brighton Rock*; but it is comforting to see her back again in revue. After all, the legitimate stage is rich in talent, but precious few clowns can carry off a revue as she can.

On the night of my visit she was "celebrating," having just signed a contract which will probably make her the highest paid star in the West-End. Though no details are published, she is committed to appear in a musical play sometime in 1946. I only hope that the author will be wise enough and clever enough to see that Hermione gets a chance to wear those snakeskin shoes—if only for ten precious minutes of the evening!

## The Ballet (Continued from page 26)

*The Fugitive* is a dramatic psychological ballet, the story of two sisters who succour a wounded fugitive from justice, of the romance which springs up between the younger sister and the fugitive, and the jealousy of the elder sister that leads to betrayal and precipitates the final tragedy. The change of character of the elder sister is too sudden to be psychologically convincing: it is a study for the novelist rather than the choreographer, although the mime of Joan McClelland, a fine dancer and dramatic artist, goes a long way towards covering the weakness. In the opening scene also the dance lacks variety, being too consistently based on the *grand battement* and with little character contrast in the movement of the sisters and that of the exhausted fugitive. The restlessness here becomes irritating and there is a need for the eloquent contrast of one quieter figure such as Ashton knows so well how to introduce in order to heighten the dramatic effect and accentuate the brilliance and beauty of the pure dance composition. The background during the major part of the ballet, indefinite but suggestive in period, is a ball, and although this is not as complete and cohesive a work as Ashton's *Nocturne* and Tudor's *Jardin Aux Lilas* Andree Howard here shows an expert command of atmosphere and of the undercurrent of suspense, as well as a marked increase in strength in the handling of a *corps-de-ballet*. The dance she has arranged to Leonard Salzedo's fine slow rumba is excellent in composition and dramatic feeling. Walter Gore and Sally Gilmour play the ill-fated young couple with sincerity and Hugh Stevenson is responsible both for the scenario and the ballet's designs.

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## Amateur Stage

THE Diamond Jubilee of the Oxford University Dramatic Society was celebrated with performances of *The Taming of the Shrew*, on June 11th to 16th, in the gardens of Wadham College. It was the late Arthur Bouchier who formed the Society, at Christ Church, in 1885, and, of the founders still alive, the most notable is Lord Lang, former Archbishop of Canterbury. C. B. Fry, Charles Morgan, Emlyn Williams, Robert Speaight, Cecil Ramage, are a selection of living personalities who in earlier days were members of O.U.D.S. For their June performances, contrary to previous practise of calling in London actresses and producers, they relied on an all-Oxford production. Mr. Alec Wyton (Exeter) contributed special music, and Mr. Arthur Ashby (Exeter) produced.

From Brighton comes news of a development which should set a good example for other areas. It is a move by the professional theatre to encourage interest in the art of the stage amongst young peoples. The management of the Theatre Royal, Brighton, are forming a children's theatre guild, which by means of special performances, talks and lectures on the theatre, children's concerts and the production of plays, with members taking part, will endeavour to develop the interest of the rising generation in the theatre. Educational authorities in Brighton are supporting the scheme, which is well worth consideration as a counter measure to celluloid distractions.

Two more items from Brighton, which is advancing rapidly with its drama activities. The Forum Theatre has been formed to stage unperformed works of new dramatists "with something important to say." They invite support of all kinds, and interested readers should contact the hon. secretary, Miss Mollie Jefferson, at 49, Wish Road, Hove. A production of *Double Journey*, by Parnell Bradbury, has been arranged for September 3rd and 4th, at Ralli Hall, Hove.

The Florence Moore Theatre Studios have a creditable list of productions in recent years. The 1944-45 performances include *They came To a City*, *The Unveiling*, *The First Mrs. Fraser*, *Yellow Sands*, with *Love's Labours Lost* in hand. New members are invited in three classes—those with professional experience, holders of professional diplomas in stage technique, a limited number of students. Address for inquiries is 25, Brunswick Road, Hove, 2.

June has been a very busy month for productions. The Taverners had a reunion event for friends of the company, with a performance of Drinkwater's *Bird in Hand*, at the B.D.L. Theatre. The Taverners hope soon to have a permanent playing place of their own in central London, to which they can invite their many friends.

(Continued on facing page)



The Questors, at Ealing, held their thirteenth annual drama festival at their Mattock Lane theatre. A programme of eight plays, four of them original works by club members, was adjudicated by Miss Eileen Thorndike.

Mary Ward Players chose P.V. Carroll's *The White Steed* for two June performances at Tavistock Little Theatre. This was the first London staging of an unusual play, with a story of conflict between two Irish priests, by an author whose *Shadow and Substance* attracted attention at the Duke of York's theatre recently.

The Playmakers, a travelling company in the London area, using portable scenic devices, and with professional and amateur players, announce that they are prepared to consider new playing members. The secretary's address is 44, Chevington Road, Hanwell, W.7, telephone Ealing 4879.

Northern Polytechnic D.S. is looking forward to a return to its own theatre at the Polytechnic in Holloway Road, N.7, now that the war is over. Since September, 1941, they have given 27 different plays at the Central Library, Islington, and their future ambitions aim at a high standard repertory company. Interested readers thinking of membership should apply to the society's Business Manager.

North Shields Triangle Players recently gave three performances of *Ladies in Retirement*. The company use a charming theatre at the Sir James Knott Youth Centre. Their next production will be *To Kill a Cat*.

The Northampton Drama Club are presenting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as their fourth open-air production in connection with the Holidays-at-Home programme under the auspices of the Borough Council. Under the direction of Mr. T. Osborne Robinson, a cast of over sixty will give eleven performances at the end of this month. Transport difficulties prevent the play being "toured" to all the public parks as was last year's production of *Toad of Toad Hall*, which was witnessed by six thousand people. A lovely pastoral setting has been chosen this year. It is a grassy hillock, framed with trees and backed by a lake. Aptly enough, this "stage" is in Abington Park, which is attached to the Abbey where Shakespeare's daughter, Judith, lived for many years.

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In 1802, Thomas Trotter and his company gave the first indoor theatrical performances in Worthing, in a barn at the top of the High Street. We are reminded that barns were commonly used as theatres, and were the means of providing unfledged players with their first impetus to the London theatres proper. In these more sophisticated days, we should not forget that many who became famous, the Kembles, Siddonses, Jordans, Cookes, Keans, and others, were compelled to rough it in these barns, often with many discouragements and disappointments.

These volumes give the story of the Worthing venture, and of the Brighton theatre, where Mr. Trotter's management was in the first building, upon the site of the present Theatre Royal, New Road. We are also reminded of his part in promoting theatrical life in Gravesend, and other towns in Kent and Sussex. Not the least interesting feature of these genuinely fascinating books is the reproductions of playbills of the time, and the titles of many of the productions. It stimulates our imagination to read of *The Maid and Magpie*, or *which is the thief; Love, Law and Physic; A Bold Stroke for a Husband*; while *Boarding House*, or *Five Hours at Brighton*, quickens our curiosity to know how the amenities offered compare with our post-war modernity. We wonder how the audiences of the day enjoyed *Spectre Bridegroom*, or *a Ghost in Spite of Himself*, and if there was any doubt about *The Road to Ruin*, we may be assured that satisfaction was found in *Quadrupeds*, or *The Manager's Last Kick*.

Here are extracts from account books, revealing the nature of box office receipts, and other not unimportant items, which will make modern commercial managements sit up and take notice. It is a story of courage and high adventure, of disappointments and successes, and the whole record is veined with rich and delightful humour. The portraits of many famous players are reproduced with admirable care, and it should be added that each book is a delight to see and handle. Here in type, paper and layout is an achievement typical of the best pre-war publishing.



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